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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: ITURI UPDATE: FARDC SEIZES AMMUNITION CACHE,  
FIGHTS MILITIA NEAR TCHOMIA

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) According to internal MONUC Eastern Division situation reports, elements of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) intercepted April 30 an illegal arms shipment destined for militias operating in Ituri District. MONUC security officials in Bunia had received reports from FARDC sources that a specific Toyota pickup truck was transporting ammunition from Bunia to areas controlled by militia forces. In response, MONUC peacekeepers established a surveillance operation on the suspected vehicle, which was seen being driven out of Bunia April 29 towards Bogoro. The morning of April 30, FARDC troops seized the truck and recovered five 20-liter Jerry cans filled with ammunition (7.62 millimeter rounds). MONUC reports the truck's driver fled, but the passenger was arrested, taken into custody and is currently being interrogated in Kisangani by the FARDC.

¶2. (C) MONUC-Bunia officials said they have also received reports that other arms trafficking operations in and around Bunia are being supported by a local businessman, who remains at large. During preliminary interrogation, the arrested passenger alleged that elements of the FARDC are also involved in the arms transfers to militias. MONUC sources said they have no independent confirmation of this allegation, but are monitoring the area closely for evidence of such trafficking.

¶3. (C) Meanwhile, FARDC and MONUC peacekeepers launched April 28 an offensive against militia elements near Bokuku (approximately 4 miles north of Tchomia) in response to a militia attack on nearby Sabe April 27. A company of FARDC troops exchanged fire with militia forces outside Bokuku, but after a three-hour firefight, some Congolese soldiers began withdrawing towards Tchomia after sustaining injuries. The Bangladeshi peacekeeping contingent in Tchomia responded to the battle, and prevented the further retreat of FARDC soldiers. MONUC and FARDC forces then advanced on Bokuku with the assistance of MONUC attack helicopters. In the face of the renewed counterattack, the militias fled the area, and the FARDC was able to retake control of Bokuku. According to MONUC, one FARDC soldier was killed and two were injured in the fighting. The bodies of four militia (including one woman) were recovered as well.  
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